

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 18-21 are allowed. Claims 1-12 and 15-17 were rejected. By entry of this Amendment, claim 5 is amended, claims 1-4 and 17 are cancelled and no new claims are added. No new matter has been added. Consequently, claims 5-12 and 15-16 and 18-21 are pending.

Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) because the drawings do not show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In response, the Applicant submits replacement sheets pursuant to the Examiner's comments. Specifically, replacement sheet 5/6 includes Figures 5A and 6A which each show the hitch ball of claim 5 and 18. No new matter has been added. The Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw this objection.

Objection to the Claims

The Examiner has objected to claim 5 because certain language was found to be unclear. The specific language cited by the Examiner has been amended. The Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw this objection.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claim 5 has been amended to better define the invention. Claim 5 is directed to an adjustable coupler lock assembly for securing a coupler to a hitch ball. The assembly includes a coupler, a hitch ball, a lock body and a shaft. The shaft is movable in either of two insertion directions relative to the lock body but not in an opposing withdrawal direction when the coupler locking mechanism is in a locked position, with the coupler latch in a closed position and the coupler in contact with the hitch ball.

The Examiner has rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Howard and by Byrd. However, claim 5 includes features that are not disclosed or suggested by

the Howard or Byrd reference and is patentable over each reference. For example, neither reference teaches or suggests an assembly having a coupler, hitch ball, lock body and shaft, wherein the shaft can be inserted in two opposing directions relative the lock body.

Consequently, claim 5 is patentable over each reference and is in condition for allowance.

Claims 6-12 and 15-16 are also patentable at least based on direct or indirect dependence on claim 5, and are in condition for allowance.

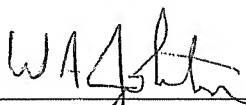
Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maxwell and Byrd. However, claim 5 includes features that are not disclosed or suggested by the Maxwell and Byrd and is patentable over Maxwell and Byrd. For example, neither Maxwell and Byrd teach or suggest an assembly having a coupler, hitch ball and shaft, wherein the shaft can be inserted in two opposing directions relative the lock body, but not in an opposing withdrawal direction when the locking mechanism is in a locked position. Consequently, claim 5 is in condition for allowance. Claims 6-12 and 15-16 are also patentable at least based on direct or indirect dependence on claim 5, and are in condition for allowance.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims of this application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims of this application is respectfully solicited. Furthermore, if the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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